

Just as a cyberattack exposes vulnerabilities in software and systems, an attack on democracy exposes vulnerabilities in our constitution and system of government. When lying and cheating are ignored, and insidiously become enshrined as “American values”, a venal, amoral, egomaniacal, psychotic windbag who admires foreign dictators more than any of his countrymen, can reach the highest office in the land. It can happen here. It did, in 2016.

When elected legislators stand idly by or even assist terrorists intent on overthrowing the government, we have reached an unthinkable crossroads in American life. We reached that crossroad on January 6, 2021, when a mob of Trump supporters, QAnon wackos and other opportunists assaulted the Capitol while congress was in session.

Clearly, there are some things we need to fix. Here is a proposal to initiate a conversation about what needs to be fixed and how we can do it.

The Constitution:

1. Make clear that the President is not above the law.

If a President commits a crime while in office, there should be consequences, even if the consequences occur after the President’s term expires.

2. Repeal or revise the 2nd amendment.

We need to make clear that we do not want an armed citizenry, but only officially-sanctioned state militias. We have come a long way from Montesquieu’s ideal, adopted by the founding fathers, that "government should be set up so that no man need be afraid of another".

Congress:

1. Institute term limits.

Three terms and you’re out. No more lifetime appointments. No more Strom Thurmonds, no more Mitch McConnells.

2. Eliminate or modify the filibuster.

Should one lunatic be able to make the wheels of government grind to a halt ?

3. Eliminate lobbyists.

We should at least seriously restrict the ability of lobbyists to wine and dine and otherwise throw money at our elected legislators. Remind the legislators that they work for us, not anyone with money to throw around.

4. Defund QAnon.

A blatant example of a lunatic conspiracy cult, not averse to consorting with terrorists (see video of Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol), with the ultimate goal of weakening and undermining the legitimately-elected government. The FBI and CIA should be all over this like fleas on a rabid dog. Take away its money. Shut it down.

5. Vote out all weak-kneed self-absorbed legislators.

Elected representatives from whatever party, who refuse to stand up for truth and justice, two pillars of any democratic society, should be voted out. Whose interests are they representing ?

Society:

Some of the disruptions we are seeing almost certainly result from a lack of coherence in society. This is partly due to the freedoms which our society bestows, and partly to a neglect of our individual responsibilities to keep our society strong.

1. Require national service.

We need to restore the ideal of a participatory democracy, where every person has a responsibility to contribute to the ongoing health of the nation in which they live. We can accomplish this by requiring 12 months participation in a social service organization, or the military by every 18 year-old. Social service could include existing community service organizations, corporate or government internships, or specifically-created organizations like the WPA or CCC, with a goal of improving minority participation in the economy, as well as instilling democratic community values.

2. Institute and enforce national standards of policing.

Emphasize protecting the citizenry, and accountability. Without guns on the street, the police should be able to relax a bit, since they won't be fearing for their lives at every encounter with the public.

3. Increase environmental awareness.

We need to be better stewards of our shared resources on this planet. All of our actions need to be evaluated in regard to sustainability and environmental health.